

SENATE BILL 870

J1, J3

6lr3016
CF HB 1092

By: **Senator A. Washington**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Finance

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland Department of Health – Adolescent Psychiatric Inpatient Beds –**
3 **Capacity in Prince George’s County and Report**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Department of Health to ensure the
5 establishment and ongoing operation of a minimum number of licensed adolescent
6 psychiatric inpatient beds in Prince George’s County; requiring, under certain
7 circumstances, the Department to issue a request for proposals to establish
8 adolescent psychiatric inpatient beds in the county and to administer a certain grant
9 program; requiring the Department to report to the Governor and the General
10 Assembly on certain information related to adolescent psychiatric inpatient bed
11 capacity in the State; and generally relating to adolescent psychiatric inpatient bed
12 capacity.

13 BY adding to
14 Article – Health – General
15 Section 19–310.7
16 Annotated Code of Maryland
17 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

18 Preamble

19 WHEREAS, Maryland hospitals experience pediatric psychiatric overstay and
20 boarding pressures, and State law recognizes the occurrence of pediatric psychiatric
21 overstays and the need to transfer youth to appropriate treatment settings when clinically
22 indicated; and

23 WHEREAS, Prince George’s County has experienced reductions in adolescent
24 psychiatric inpatient service capacity, including the revocation of adolescent psychiatric
25 inpatient bed licenses; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



WHEREAS, The Maryland Department of Health maintains a statewide psychiatric bed registry and referral system to identify available inpatient psychiatric beds and to coordinate behavioral health placement; and

WHEREAS, State and local behavioral health planning documents identify an ongoing need to expand and strengthen the quality and availability of behavioral health services for children and youth; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Health – General

19-310.7.

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) “ADOLESCENT” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL AT LEAST 12 YEARS OLD AND UNDER THE AGE OF 17 YEARS.

(3) “ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENT BED” MEANS A UNIT OF LICENSED INPATIENT PSYCHIATRIC CAPACITY THAT PROVIDES OVERNIGHT, 24-HOUR, FACILITY-BASED PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION, STABILIZATION, AND TREATMENT FOR ADOLESCENTS.

(B) (1) THE DEPARTMENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY LOCAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AUTHORITY, SHALL ENSURE THE ESTABLISHMENT AND ONGOING OPERATION OF AT LEAST 24 ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENT BEDS IN PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY BY:

(I) EXPANDING THE LICENSED INPATIENT BED CAPACITY AT AN EXISTING INPATIENT FACILITY IN PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY;

(II) CONTRACTING WITH A PRIVATE OR NONPROFIT OPERATOR THAT WILL ESTABLISH AND OPERATE A LICENSED ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENT FACILITY; OR

(III) ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TO FINANCE AND OPERATE ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENT BEDS.

(2) IN CARRYING OUT PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PRIORITIZE SOLUTIONS THAT:

(I) REDUCE PEDIATRIC PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY
DEPARTMENT BOARDING AND INPATIENT OVERSTAYS;

(II) ARE REFLECTED IN AND MEASURABLE THROUGH THE
STATE'S INPATIENT PSYCHIATRIC BED REGISTRY AND REFERRAL SYSTEM; AND

(III) ENSURE ACCESS REGARDLESS OF PAYER SOURCE,
INCLUDING THE MARYLAND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(3) (I) IF THE DEPARTMENT DETERMINES THAT EXPANDING BED
CAPACITY UNDER PARAGRAPH (1)(I) OF THIS SUBSECTION WILL NOT MEET THE
DEADLINE ESTABLISHED UNDER PARAGRAPH (4) OF THIS SUBSECTION, ON OR
BEFORE JUNE 30, 2027, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ISSUE A REQUEST FOR
PROPOSALS TO ESTABLISH THE ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENT BEDS.

(II) A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS ISSUED UNDER
SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH SHALL BE DISTRIBUTED TO, AT A
MINIMUM, PRIVATE OR NONPROFIT OPERATORS WITH DEMONSTRATED
EXPERIENCE IN ESTABLISHING ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENT BED
CAPACITY IN THE STATE.

(4) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2028, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL
ENSURE THAT THE ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENT BEDS REQUIRED UNDER
PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION ARE FULLY OPERATIONAL AND AVAILABLE
FOR PATIENT ADMISSION.

(C) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER A COMPETITIVE GRANT
PROGRAM TO ESTABLISH THE ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENT BEDS
REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION.

(2) (I) GRANT FUNDS AWARDED UNDER A PROGRAM
ADMINISTERED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION MAY BE DISBURSED
ONLY TO:

1. HOSPITALS;
2. PSYCHIATRIC FACILITIES;
3. NONPROFIT HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS; OR
4. PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

(II) GRANT FUNDS AWARDED UNDER A PROGRAM ADMINISTERED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION MAY BE USED ONLY FOR THE FOLLOWING CAPITAL COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH OPERATING THE ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENT BEDS:

1. RENOVATION;
2. CONSTRUCTION;
3. SAFETY OR LIGATURE UPGRADES; OR
4. WORKFORCE START-UP EXPENSES.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(a) On or before October 1, 2027, and annually thereafter until 2030, the Maryland Department of Health shall report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly on:

- (1) the number and location of licensed adolescent psychiatric inpatient beds by county;
- (2) metrics for pediatric psychiatric emergency department boarding and overstay;
- (3) any barriers to staffing licensed adolescent psychiatric inpatient beds, including licensure barriers; and
- (4) recommendations for rate or regulatory changes needed to maintain sufficient capacity of licensed adolescent psychiatric inpatient beds.

(b) The Department shall use available data systems, including the State inpatient psychiatric registry and referral system, to generate data for the report required under subsection (a) of this section.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2026.